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RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE 0001
RUEHJO/AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG 2159
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SUBJECT: ANC DISBANDS WESTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE

¶1. (U) On July 19, the ANC's National Executive Council (NEC) disbanded its Northern and Western Cape (WC) provincial executive committees. About 300 general council members were informed in Cape Town that the NEC's decision to disband the provincial executive was unanimous and that a task team would be established within 14 days to run the province's affairs. On July 22, ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe was in Cape Town to establish an interim task team consisting of 22 members. Former Western Cape Premier Lynne Brown is on the new task team, while former provincial ANC chair, Mcebisi Skwatsha has been sidelined. The NEC decided it needed build new provincial structures if it wished to regain control of key municipalities in the province ahead of the local government elections in two years' time.

¶2. (U) The Western Cape branch of the ANC, which lost the province to the Democratic Alliance (DA) in the recent general election, has been fraught with problems resulting from factionalism and internal power struggles that intensified to such a degree that two rival ANC provincial conferences were held in 2008. Mismanagement and factionalism within the province has led to the ANC steadily losing its provincial support. In December 2008, the ANC was unable to contest the local by-elections due to a failure by the provincial executive to register its candidates on time. There have been numerous calls in the WC, most notably from the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) and the SA Communist Party (SACP), for the provincial executive led by Mcebisi Skwatsha to be disbanded. Critics accuse the provincial executive of sowing racial division and of neglecting branches in coloured areas. The mismanagement of the province was so severe that prior to the April 2009 general elections the ANC stripped the WC executive of all political power. The WC executive has also been directly blamed for losing the province to the DA. ANC alliance partner and Cosatu president Sdumo Dlamini said the ruling party lost the WC due to infighting within the party. Dlamini was reported as saying, "We did not lose the Western Cape because the DA was stronger, that's not true. We lost the Western Cape because we were weaker because of our own squabbles and fights amongst ourselves."

¶3. (U) In a media release Secretary General of the ANC, Gwede Mantashe, said the African/Colored divide in the province was serious and needed urgent organizational attention and ANC structures in the province were generally weak, with very few branches in colored communities. The new interim task team is comprised of sixty-five percent colored members as a way to appeal to the Cape colored communities, which widely voted for the DA in the last election. He added that deployed cadres, in general, and councilors in particular, were loyal to individuals rather than the party. He also lashed out at what he called the "public posturing" of the alliance partners, particularly some in the SACP and stated that they cause more harm to the ANC and alliance relations than good. Mantashe defended the ANC's decision to disband the WC provincial executive by saying that "while the ANC is consumed with infighting, the DA is utilizing available space by taking up the issues affecting our people."

¶4. (U) The dissolution of the WC executive was welcomed by the SACP, Cosatu, and the ANCYL, who all felt the decision was long overdue. PolAsst spoke with Joe McGluwa of the Independent Democrats' who QPolAsst spoke with Joe McGluwa of the Independent Democrats' who branded the in-fighting in the WC as the tip of the iceberg. He

said the events in the province were symptomatic of the entire ANC and said the divisions in the party were not a fight for better services for the people, but rather a fight for personal resources and power. Theuns Botha of the DA told PolAsst that his party welcomed the ANC's decision to dissolve the WC Executive as it was time the party focused on service delivery and fulfilling its campaign promises. He further stated that the DA was not concerned about the ANC regaining a foothold in the province as he believed his party had delivered on campaign promises and this would translate to votes at the polls.